

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated April 19, 2006. Claims 1-20 remain pending in this application. Claims 1, 10, and 11 are the independent claims. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

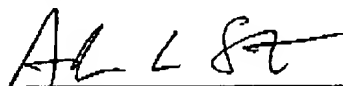
On the merits, the Office Action rejected Claims 1-3, 5-8, 10-12, 14-17, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Shimizu et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,866,702; hereinafter "Shimizu"). The Office Action also rejected Claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shimizu in view of Kobayashi (U.S. Patent No. 4,694,453; hereinafter "Kobayashi"). The Office Action also rejected Claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shimizu in view of Schenkyr (U.S. Patent No. 5,218,600; hereinafter "Schenkyr"). The Examiner has stated that Claims 13, 18, and 20 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants respectfully traverse the above rejections for at least the following reasons.

Applicants have amended Claims 1, 11, 19, and 20. No new matter has been added. Applicants have amended Claims 1 and 11 to include the allowable subject matter of Claims 18 and 13, respectively, as pointed out by the Examiner in this Office Action. Applicants have cancelled Claims 10, 13, 14, and 18. Applicants now believe this application to be in position for allowance.

Claims 2-9, 15-17, and 19-20 depend from independent Claim 1 discussed above and Claim 12 depends from independent Claim 11 discussed above and are believed patentable for at least the same reasons. Applicants further believe the §103 rejections of Claims 4 and 9 to be moot in light of the above remarks and request their withdrawal.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the currently pending claims are clearly patentably distinguishable over the cited and applied references. Accordingly, entry of this amendment, reconsideration of the rejections of the claims over the references cited, and allowance of this application is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

By 

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